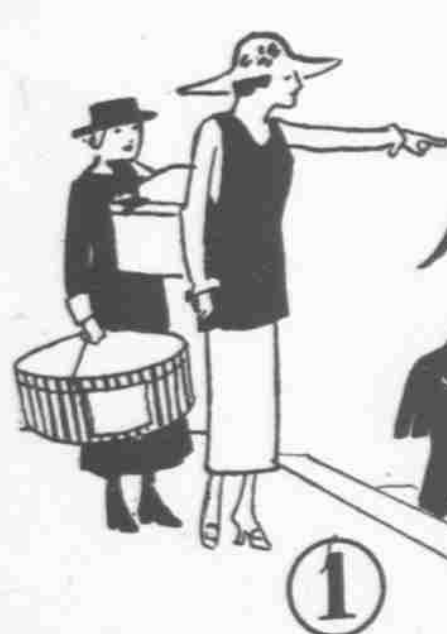


How Miss Drexel Managed Her Own Elopement

Unlike the Old Days When Timid Maids Awaited Masterful Romeos, This Modern Juliet

Drives Herself Away, Picks Up Her Waiting Lover, and Whisks Him Off to Be Wedded



THIS is the age of the new woman. She works in factories, runs cars and ships, pilots aeroplanes and has the vote—is, in fact, on full equality with man on every plane of material endeavor. Miss Alice Drexel, daughter of the very rich and fashionable John R. Drexels, of New York, Newport, Philadelphia, London and Paris, has just proved that the new woman has also reached full equality in the matter of running an elopement.

For lo and behold, instead of waiting demurely in the traditional fashion for her Romeo to come in the night with his scaling ladder, carry her palpitating down it and away to the minister, Miss Drexel, splendidly equipped, has her own big touring car brought to her own door, pitches in it all the things she needs, drives it off herself, picks up her timorous lover from behind the tree where he has been waiting for her, carries him off to the minister and is wed!

And what makes this triumph of new womanhood even greater is the fact that the man she married is a soldier and an officer, Captain William Barrett, of the United States Air Forces, wounded twice in France and by reason of his training supposedly versed in campaigns and stratagems against the enemy, whether the latter be armies or a sweetheart's recalcitrant parents.

What a change from the olden days of romance! What a demonstration of the advance of women since the time when the knights rode around in armor, fighting and enjoying themselves! At that time the burden of the elopement was all on the man and was attended largely by what to-day we would call police court incidents. While Lady Claire, the fair young demoiselle, sat in her bower she would hear a clash of arms, and what the Elizabethan dramatists call loud alarms. Eventually her headstrong lover would appear in the bower, clasp her against his shirt of mail, stride away over the prostrate bodies of her relatives and retainers, set her on his warhorse, leap in front of her, and with her arms clasped about his middle jog away to domesticity.

If he did not appear in the bower it meant that the Lady Claire was minus one suitor and was probably in for a disciplining.

Later on, as armor was discarded, swords, rapiers and daggers had their day. Then rope ladders were popular. With mechanical progress the ease with which an elopement could be carried out became greater, and parents had more cause for anxiety. But always and ever it was the man who devised the ways, carried them out, was the party of the first part, as they say in the legal contracts. Running true to custom, it was the duty of the desired lady to take little part in the proceedings except to be acquiescent. She was supposed to sit demurely, maybe protest a little now and then, at the most do no more than slide down the ladder into her suitor's waiting arms. After that, as before that, it was all up to him.

Let us consider now Miss Drexel's first equal suffrage elopement. Miss Drexel is a granddaughter of the late Anthony J. Drexel, of Philadelphia, who left a fortune of \$30,000,000, of which her father got the most. Mrs. Drexel, her mother, is one of the most famous of American beauties and one of the proudest. Her cousin is the Viscountess Maidstone—Margarita Drexel—and the Maidstones are noted, even among the English nobility, for their exclusiveness. She has known and been admired by kings, princes, dukes and such like all over the world.

But most important, during the last seven years, the daughter of the Drexels had specifically, and with intention matrimonial, been courted by at least four sterling young American men of social position and wealth, and by one French gentleman without much of either. And always, just as the interesting moment drew near when she would have the opportunity to say "yes" or "no"—as the case might have been—she was suddenly and unexpectedly whisked away beyond the range of her wooer. It might have been coincidence each time, but Miss Drexel suspected it wasn't. Indeed, it is entirely permissible to say that she more than suspected it was mamma.

Therefore, after taking tea 'not more than two months ago with the Princess Murat, the Princess Rospigliosi and a few other of her titled friends, now in New York, she did not tell mamma that she had met a man there who had interested her greatly. Yes, this man was Captain Barrett.

The captain came from Washington

1—At Ten O'clock in the Morning Miss Drexel Calmly Superintends the Moving of Her Gowns, Hats, Etc., "For a Week's End Stay with Friends in Tuxedo." Behind Her Is Seen Her Unsuspecting Maid.

2—On the Road to Bronx Park Miss Drexel Informs the Maid That She Had Better Go Back Home, and This Surprised Young Lady Is Seen Obeying.

3—At the Appointed Place in Bronx Park Captain Barrett and His Best Man Emerge from Concealment and Are Welcomed by the Resourceful Juliet.

4—Whizzing Along the Roads to New Rochelle Miss Drexel Drives the Gallant Captain to the Minister, Where They Are Married.

5—And with Trousseau and Bridegroom All Safely Together She Whirls Away on Her Honeymoon.

originally. His family was one of those perfectly good ones society never heard of. He had been educated in England and had tutored young sprigs of the nobility there and, later, young sprigs of the American autocracy in New York and Newport. When America went into the war he joined the aviation forces, serving largely in France as instructor.

Miss Drexel liked him. The liking grew apace. But with vivid memory of what had so often happened before when she found herself growing to like certain men, she did not ask him to call at the Drexel home in New York and scrupulously forebore almost even to think of him when in Mamma Drexel's company.

"Mamma," she had been known to remark, "is uncanny—about some things."

So the daughter of the Drexels and the gallant aviator met here and there at tea rooms, saw each other as frequently as possible at the homes of sympathetic friends, ran into each other in the Park and managed to be together just as much as it is possible under the rose.

Then came a time when each knew the other's heart. And Miss Drexel very firmly and decidedly said "yes."

But the question remained—"How?"

She was under no illusions as to what would happen if she told papa and mamma what she had agreed to do. No, it would have to be an elopement. But manifestly Captain Barrett couldn't scale the front of her house, draw her half-reluctant out of the window and down to any waiting steed. It can't be done in New York with the police walking by every few minutes. Besides, there were a lot of pretty dresses she wanted to take with her—otherwise, of course, they could just go and get married. How could she get those dresses out?

Quite suddenly Miss Drexel blossomed into the new womanhood, a wave of resourcefulness swept through her.

"Don't you worry," said she to the impatient captain. "Now, here's what we'll do—"

They whispered.

It was next morning that Miss Alice, attired in a bewitching negligee, looked languidly over toward her mother.

"I think, if you don't mind, I'll go up to Tuxedo for the week's end, mamma," she said, and mentioned as her destination there a family which Mrs. Drexel knew would be entirely free of suitors, prospective or otherwise—a completely safe family. Miss Drexel knew it, too; that was why she had picked that particular family out.

"Why, of course," agreed mamma at once.

"And I think I'll just drive up myself with Heloise," pursued her daughter. "I want to take quite a lot of things, for I may stay a little longer and I'll need a maid."

All of which sounded so entirely reasonable to Mrs. Drexel that she hardly even thought about it. But Heloise, who wasn't at all in the secret, wondered a bit how long she was going to be away from New York, for the dresses and things Miss Alice was picking out to pack looked like a whole season.

Promptly at ten next morning Miss Drexel's own big imported touring car rolled up to the door. Down the steps came servants carrying what is called a week-end trunk—capacity three suit cases—four actual suit cases and a valise or two. Behind them was Heloise, almost completely surrounded by hat boxes.

Mrs. John R. Drexel, Whose Sustained Objections to Various Other Suitors,

Caused, Her Friends Say, Her Daughter to Elope When the Right Man Came Along.

And after all these things had been adjusted in the back, down the steps strolled Miss Alice, outwardly, at least, calm and care-free and dressed in one dark blue satin gown, one blue tulle hat, trimmed with flowers, and jacket of moleskin.

The chauffeur relinquished the wheel to her—for, in the phrase of the chauffeur, "Miss Alice is a bearcat of a driver"—touched his hat, grinned at Heloise and disappeared. Under the hand of the Drexel daughter the big car gathered speed, wound around in traffic for a while, shot over the northern tip of Manhattan, and began to purr along toward Bronx Park.

And right here Heloise, the maid, got the shock of her life. The car stopped and Miss Drexel turned to her.

"Here, Heloise," she said, "is where you get out," or words to that effect.

How can one describe the emotions of a perfectly trained maid, who, while thinking she is going to Tuxedo for a pleasant visit, is told to get off on a side approach to Bronx Park? It's impossible!

Nevertheless the fact remains that Heloise untangled herself from the luggage and got off. And there she stood, thinking who can say what thoughts as she watched the big car whizz on and vanish in the distance.

Not far did it go. Only to Bronx Park itself. And there an eager gentleman in the uniform of a captain of the air service disengaged himself from the shrubbery and leaped jubilantly to the auto. It was, as you have suspected, Captain Barrett.

Behind him was another young man, Stanley Bargo, a New York friend, who had agreed to be witness and best man at the elopement.

"Everything all right?" caroled the captain as he approached.

Did Miss Alice fall fainting into his arms, relinquishing here the conduct of the expedition and thus resume the old-fashioned manner? Not at all.

"Jump in, Billy," she commanded. "Come on, Mr. Bargo. We've got to pick up Peggy Graydon now."

Peggy—Miss Margaret Graydon—one of Miss Drexel's intimates, was just where she had been told to be.

Whizz went the big car again, straight on to New Rochelle, and drawing up in front of the home of the pastor of the New Rochelle Methodist Episcopal Church, Miss Drexel slipped the gears into neutral, turned off the spark, put down the brakes and went in and was married!

The first historically recorded new woman elopement was an unqualified success!

Later, Mamma and Papa Drexel were notified. It is certain that for a time things must have been very distressing. They even issued a statement. An unheard of thing in Drexel circles so far as purely personal matters are concerned.

"Mr. and Mrs. Drexel have not had the pleasure of meeting Captain Barrett and know nothing whatever about him. Their daughter's wedding is, therefore, both a surprise and a shock to them."

But a day or so later all four spent an evening together, and every one supposes



Above is Mrs. William Barrett—Formerly Miss Alice Drexel Heiress of the John R. Drexel Millions—Who by Her Elopement Proved That the Juliets of Fiction Are Old Fashioned and Must Be Modernized. Below Is Captain William Barrett, of the United States Air Forces, the Romeo in the Romance.

that everything is all right. For the former Miss Drexel's sake every one hopes it is. She has no sources of income of her own despite her family's enormous wealth.

Captain Barrett has no money, either, but he says he can easily earn all that he and his wife will need, which is decidedly optimistic on his part, as his bride has been reared in the most sumptuous lap of luxury and has no more idea of the value of a dollar than an unborn baby.

Soon as certain tiresome business details are settled the pair are going to England to live.

But there the proud Maidstones—and Margarita Drexel, the Viscountess, is said to have grown prouder than the traditions she married—are not likely now to accept the Barretts as equals.

Nevertheless, society wags wise heads, and those who remember it quote, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

Mrs. Drexel, they feel, turned her back on so many absolutely acceptable possible sons-in-law that, really, now it is difficult to extend her much sympathy.

